Maudslay State Park

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Massachusetts Department of
Environmental Management

Maudslay, A New State Park

The 450-acre Maudslay State Park in Newburyport, formerly the Moseley Estate, features nineteenth-century gardens and plantings, rolling meadows, towering pine forests, and one of the largest naturally-occurring stands of mountain laurel in eastern Massachusetts. Acquired in 1985, the park is a unique addition to the Massachusetts state park system.

Stone bridge over the flowering pond. DEM photo

The Maudslay Landscape

Maudslay's laurels have covered the banks of the Merrimack River through centuries of human habitation. The site of early native American settlements, the riverfront at Maudslay also played an important role in the colonial economy. The Amesbury-Newbury ferry, established in 1668, crossed the Merrimack River from a point near the laurels. George Washington used the ferry landing when he visited the area in 1789.

From 1849 to 1870, Mr. and Mrs. William Ashby of Newburyport hosted annual literary parties at the Laurel Grounds. Guests included such famous figures as John Greenleaf Whittier, who composed several poems about the site.

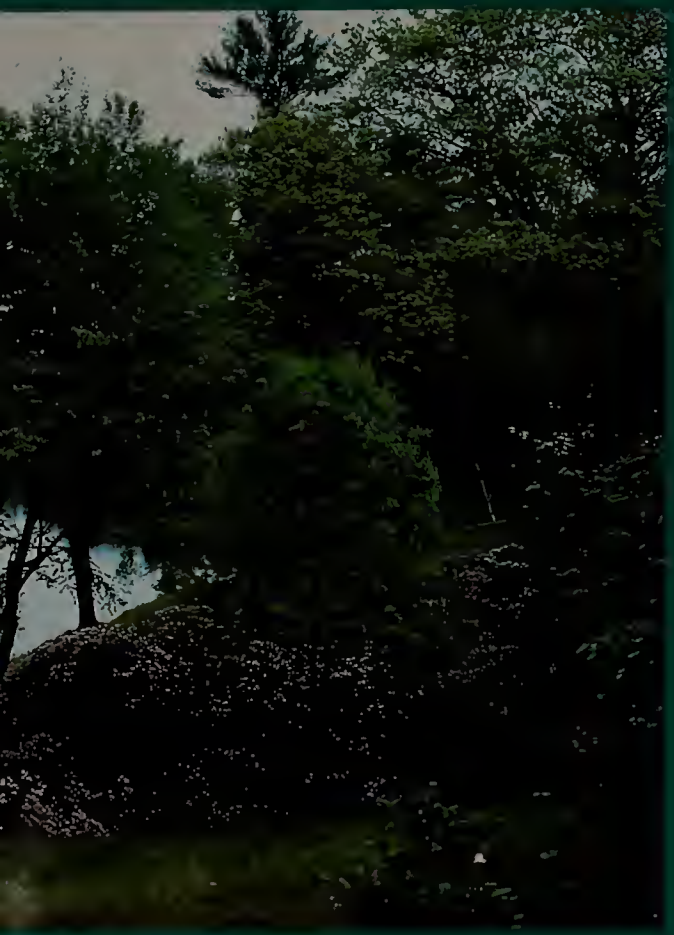
Sing soft, sing low, our lowland river,
Under thy banks of Laurel-bloom
Softly and sweet as the hour becometh,
Sing us the songs of peace and home.

More than a century later, the spectacular mountain laurel still graces the river's banks at Maudslay, attracting countless visitors during the June blooming season.

Main house as it looked in the 1940s. Photo courtesy Dr. Charles E. Beveridge

In 1805, the Moseleys, one of the wealthiest families in New England, settled in Newburyport. Seeking to protect this beautiful place, they began acquiring portions of the Laurel Grounds in the 1860's. The family continued to acquire surrounding lands and by 1900 had assembled a substantial estate, which they named Maudesleigh (later known as Maudslay), after the family's ancestral home in England.

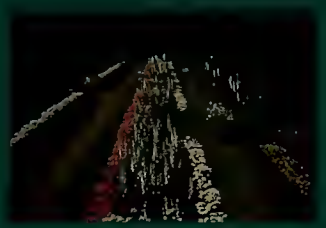
The Moseleys bought the last parcel, the west side of Castle (or Laurel) Hill in the 1920s, from Katherine Tingley, who had staged outdoor Shakespearean performances on the site. Katherine Tingley's house was moved off the property. On the east side of Laurel Hill stood "Moulton's Castle," a twenty-two room wooden gothic home built by Captain Henry Moulton. The "castle" was razed in 1900 when it was purchased by Charles Moseley.



Carolina Rhododendrons near the site of Helen Moseley's house. Photo by Dorothy Kerper Monnelly

In 1895, Frederick Moseley began converting a small farmhouse overlooking the river into a magnificent summer and weekend residence with more than forty rooms. Between 1939 and 1941, Frederick's daughter, Helen Jr., built a large colonial style house on a second river site. Neither structure remains today. The main house was demolished in 1955 after the deaths of Frederick and Helen Sr.; fire destroyed Helen Moseley Jr.'s house in 1978.

The Moseley family was responsible for shaping as well as preserving the natural landscape of Maudslay. They planted ornamental trees and masses of azaleas and rhododendrons, and created formal gardens, a pond bordered by flowering shrubs, carriage roads and trails, and several stone bridges, all of which visitors to Maudslay State Park can enjoy today.

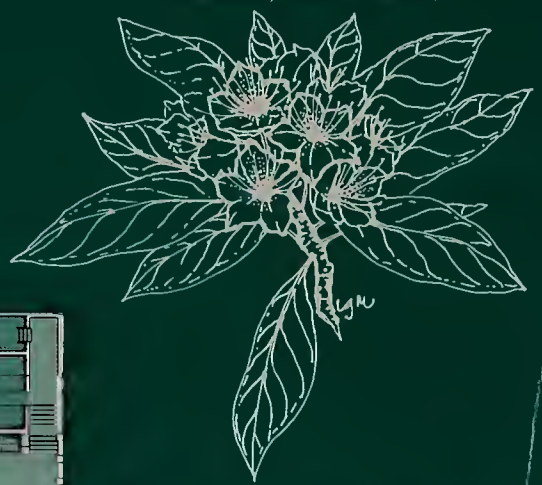


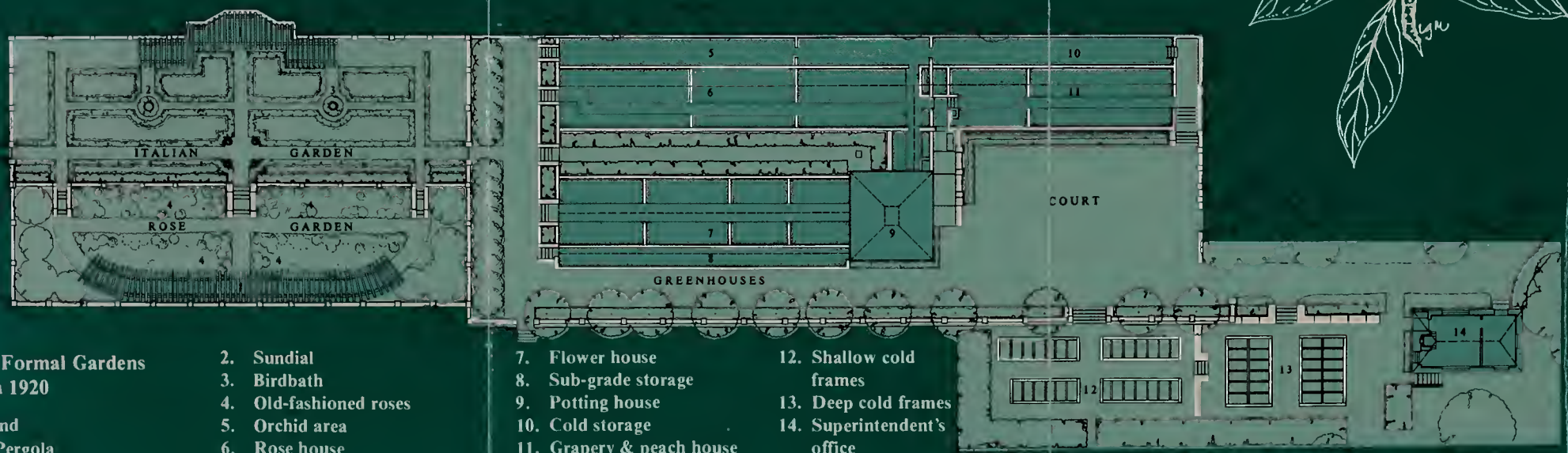
Italian Garden as it looked in the 1940s. Photo courtesy Dr. Charles E. Beveridge

Vegetable garden as it looked in the 1940s. Photo courtesy Dr. Charles E. Beveridge

Maudslay in Bloom

April		Purple Trillium, Large-flowered Trillium, Crocus, Daffodils
May	1st week	Dogwoods begin, Hawthorns, Crab Apple
	2nd week	Roses begin, Trout Lily, Wild Geranium, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Royal Azalea
	3rd week	Hybrid Rhododendrons begin, Kaempferi Azalea, Lady Slipper, Apple trees, Carolina Rhododendron
	4th week	Lily of the Valley, Bunchberry
June	1st week	Ghent/Exbury Azaleas, Lilac
	2nd week	Roses peak, Mountain Laurel begin Phlox, Coreopsis, Foxglove
	3rd week	Mountain Laurel peak Rock Columbine, Ox-eye Daisy
	4th week	Maximum Rhododendron begin
July	1st week	Harebells, Wood Lily
	2nd week	Indian Pipe, Black-eyed Susan, Pipsissewa, Blueberries
	3rd week	Spotted Wintergreen
August		Goldenrod, Pasture Thistle, Asters





The Formal Gardens circa 1920

Legend

1. Pergola
2. Sundial
3. Birdbath
4. Old-fashioned roses
5. Orchid area
6. Rose house
7. Flower house
8. Sub-grade storage
9. Potting house
10. Cold storage
11. Grapery & peach house
12. Shallow cold frames
13. Deep cold frames
14. Superintendent's office

The Park Today

Although no mansions remain, the estate grounds retain much of the beauty that graced the estate in the Moseley's day. Trees and shrubs flower through spring and summer and in the fall the landscape is ablaze with colorful foliage. The open meadows and fields offer long scenic views, while the towering pines and the mountain laurel provide areas of quiet seclusion.

Today, the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is working to ensure the preservation of Maudslay's historic and scenic landscape. Plans are underway to improve existing features and restore many of the gardens and specimen plantings that gave Maudslay its unique character.

Maudslay State Park offers a wide range of recreational activities: hiking, bicycle riding, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding. Picnickers are welcome.

Public Programs

Interpretive programs, such as guided walks and lectures are available on a regular basis. As part of DEM's Arts-in-the-Parks program, artists-in-residence at Maudslay offer performances, workshops, and special events to the public.

Check the bulletin board near the parking area for upcoming programs.

Park Guidelines

Hours: From 8AM to dusk daily

Please NO: motorized vehicles
horses, except on designated equestrian trail
hunting and trapping
fishing, except in the Merrimack River
fires
metal detectors
alcoholic beverages

Please DO NOT pick flowers or other vegetation. Keep your dogs on a leash. From November through March, a portion of the park will be closed to protect the preferred habitat of wintering Bald Eagles.

Park Interpreter at work. DEM photo

Massachusetts Forests and Parks

For more information

Maudslay State Park
Curzon's Mill Road
Newburyport, MA
01950
(617) 465 7223

Park Map

Legend

- Park boundary
- Boundary of areas closed to the public
- Eagle-Mountain Laurel protection area (closed Nov.-March)
- Carriage roads for hiking, cross-country skiing
- Equestrian trail
- Footpaths
- Stone bridges
- Main pedestrian trail entrance
- Equestrian trail entrance
- Forested areas
- Open fields
- Wetlands
- Open water
- Streams
- Buildings

Park Features

1. Temporary parking area
2. State Park sign
3. Portable toilets

Historic/ Horticultural Features

4. Gate and entry to main house site
5. Azalea swamp
6. Main house site
7. Tower hill
8. Italian/rose gardens
9. Greenhouse area
10. Vegetable garden
11. Long border garden
12. Rhododendron dell
13. Helen Moseley's house site
14. Beech grove
15. Dam
16. Pond
17. Stone bridge
18. Christmas tree grove
19. Lower Davis field
20. Pine grove
21. The punch bowl (a kettle hole)
22. Point of rocks
23. The Laurels
24. Castle Hill
25. Bootlegger's field
26. The open fields

Special Walks

- Garden Walk: ¼ mile walking time: 20 minutes.
- River Trail: 1¼ miles walking time: 45 minutes.
- Laurel Trail: 3 miles walking time: 1½ hours.

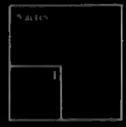
Directions to Maudslay State Park

From north and south: I-95 to Rt. 113 EAST; follow 113 EAST ½ mile to Noble St. (left). At stop sign turn left onto Ferry Rd. Follow signs to park. 3.3 miles from I-95.

From west: I-495 (exit 55) to Rt. 110 EAST. Continue 1 mile to Merrill St. (right at 2nd light). Continue on Merrill St./Spafford St. for 1.5 miles. Turn right before stop sign onto Ferry Rd. Follow signs to park. 4 miles from I-495.

Note: Contour interval is 10'
Trail locations are approximate.

scale in feet
0 100 200 400 800 feet north



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